

## Michael Eaton at London Church International (09/03/08)

### **ACHIEVING THE PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE**

*“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.” (Heb 6:11-12 NIV)*

Also see Romans 1v8-17.

#### **I want you to both find AND achieve God's purpose for your life.**

God has promised us things. The Bible calls it our “inheritance”. By faith and patience we inherit it.

God has foreordained good works. Before He brought the universe into being, He had your life and its purpose in mind.

**The theme of all Hebrews is pressing on in our faith, to inherit the promises.** Heb 11 is a sample of people who pressed on and persevered. In no case did God talk of how any of them got saved.

**This is not saving faith, but persevering faith.** This is Enoch skipped his funeral; Moses parents hiding their son; Joshua marching around a city.

God is saying, *“don't be lazy but press on and believe”.*

#### **The purpose of your life is not just to get saved.**

Salvation is just coming through the door, taking the first step.

#### **The classic case of believing promises is ABRAHAM.**

He was saved in Gen 11 and 12. But he was also given promises. These were only fulfilled at the end of Genesis. I will give you land, a seed, a child. I will bless all nations through you.

Also there were many women who believed too - Sarah, Deborah.

#### **So, God has a purpose and an achievement for your life.**

*This is your calling.* I cannot get specific with you, but it will have something to do with the Kingdom of God in Jesus. Like the calling of every saint of old.

**God will also enable you to fulfil this.**

He is promising you provision. Whatever you need. But He will match your needs, not your greeds.

He will give you strength.

He will deal with your enemies.

He will personally bless you. And he will bless others through you. Just as He promised Abraham.

All these require your faith, to fulfill your calling. **Not saving faith. But diligent faith. Persevering faith.** There is a difference.

Your saving faith has no works in it. None of your good works deserve anything. You can do nothing to get saved, but only believe in Jesus. God alone saves you, and it is free. The only thing you contribute towards your sins being forgiven, is the sins that need to be forgiven you!

But persistent faith is different. You need to do some things to achieve the purpose of God. The "*works of faith*". This is the next step on. This is applying your faith.

**This is more difficult than getting saved.** It is easier to believe God for your final salvation than for tomorrow morning. Tomorrow you need to apply your faith. You face difficulties, enemies, troubles.

This happened to **Israel** in the wilderness. They take the passover, and are delivered from Pharaoh. But then they face the Red Sea! Will they have faith for God's deliverance now? It took more faith to cross that sea than to put lamb's blood on their doorposts.

Or the terror of the **disciples** in the storm tossed boat. Where is your faith?

You need this kind of faith because you will always face three main obstacles. One from God. One from satan. One from yourself.

**The one from God is DELAY.** God promises Abraham a boy, a seed. But Sarah is barren. God piles it on, saying his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. But he cannot even have one child. Abraham wavers. He thinks maybe his servant will inherit. Then he sleeps with Hagar.

*The lesson is don't be surprised by delay.* His inheritance always seems slow in coming. Where is this great church you promised me when I planted? You need to go back from time to time, to check up with God. He will give you some confirmation and you will persist a little more.

**From the devil you get OPPOSITION.** There is something demonic about it. Negative miracles - amazing things the devil does! Your best friends turn against you. This obstacle confronted Jesus - straight after he is baptized, he is attacked by satan.

**From yourself, you find WEAKNESS.** This is why Hebrews so often tells us that Jesus is touched by our weaknesses. Sarah is in her 90s and only has the promise. *Often the calling is beyond your ability.* It is too big, and soon you are ready to give up. You may have physical, intellectual, spiritual weakness. Failings. "How can you be using me, Lord?". No, God says, "get up off your face". This is the domain of faith and patience.

Jesus himself had weaknesses. He could get tired. He could get hungry. He could be perplexed. **This is proof to you that weakness is not sin.** Jesus could break down at the tomb of Lazarus. He could get angry.

**God is going to use you in spite of your weaknesses.** Jesus is interceding for you. He is touched. Other people might reject you for your weakness. But Jesus never will. He knows about all your weaknesses, and he will never reject you. Nothing surprises Him about you.

The only thing you need to do is to persist in faith and go boldly to find grace in time of need. Go and find mercy. **Find mercy for the past and find grace for the future.** *God will only give you grace when you need it.* He will not give it to you in advance. You find grace "in the time of need".

So go on believing. This is why it requires patience. God gets angry when you give up. Unless the Lord knows you have made a mistake. Then the answer will always be "no". If you feel called to be a bank robber, for example.

Go on praying - *"always to pray and not to faint"*

He will get angry with you for a little bit. Not forever, but He will get angry if you give up.

He got angry with Zechariah for giving up on his prayers for a baby. So the angel says he will be deaf and dumb until John's birth.

Your prayer will be answered, but don't give up before the answer comes! We become unworthy of the Kingdom of God. We miss the full blessings. *You are still saved, but you miss something by drawing back.* "If anyone draws back, my soul will take no pleasure in him".

I don't believe you can lose your salvation, but you can lose your inheritance. Israel never got to the land flowing with milk and honey, bar two men in Joshua and Caleb. "10 times you have rebelled against me", God said to Israel. And He takes an oath against them.

You may think you have lost your inheritance. **But you can know God has not given up on you, if you still hear His voice.** You have not lost your inheritance if you still hear His voice. "*Today, if you hear his voice...*". If you will not hear his voice, then I am wasting my time. Why talk to a deaf person?

You don't need to worry as long as you are open to God.

**So how do you find out detail of your calling?** Guidance is God's job more than it is your job.

Sometimes you don't know for years.

Sometimes what you thought was your calling was only the preparation for the next bit. And so on!

### ***Look at Joseph.***

He is going to be prime minister of Egypt. He is a shepherd boy who is sold into slavery.

In Potiphar's house, he is trained in administration. You cannot go from shepherd boy to prime minister in one step!

Just when he was enjoying life, thinking maybe his future would be a high level administrator in Potiphar's house, he has an argument with Mrs Potiphar, and he is thrown into prison. And he gets more training.

He tries to get out but is left there for two more years.

Suddenly, on a day, the door is opened and he goes from dungeon to prime minister in one day.

He could never have predicted this. **Anybody who has ever done anything great never knew it at the beginning of his life.**

*Martyn Lloyd Jones* was studying to be a doctor

*Martin Luther* was just a little monk stuck away somewhere. He had no idea his ministry would transform all Europe.

**Your destiny might be bigger than you think!**

*But all you need to know is Stage number ONE.* What would God have you do now? Take it one step at a time.

As you step, something more will open up to you. And it does not matter how old you are.

I met a 95 year old man who was dying of cancer. I led him to the Lord 11 days before he died. He asked what the use of his salvation was, so close to his death? He could achieve nothing for God. I told him his destiny had something to do with how he was going to die. He was to die with faith. He took me seriously. He began to summon all his friends and colleagues. He witnessed to every conceivable person he could. He did more for God in 11 days than most Christians do in their entire lives! He saw the Lord in His bedroom as he was dying! His funeral was packed, and even the country's president sent a letter of condolence!

**Life is not finished until it is finished.** You may retire from your job, but never from the Kingdom. God's will spans to your dying day.

**It is not wrong to have wishes.** Paul desired to get to Rome to minister there. It is ok to ask God. It is ok to put your heart desires to God. He will give you the desires of your heart, because He put them there anyway.

**In the Kingdom the way you are made is connected to your destiny.**  
When folk ask me what they should do for God, I say, "what do you want to do for God?"

*James Hudson Taylor* would gaze at a map of China as a teenage boy.

Then years later he said to God he would do anything for Him. And God said, "go to China for me"!

*Florence Nightingale* was a very intellectual and refined lady. She is one of my great heroes. But all she wanted to do was to heal the sick, right from being a little girl. She would heal stray dogs. She would put bandages on her dolls! She was born to be a nurse. And that was in a time when nursing was a terrible job.

**When you feel you were born to be something that is probably what your destiny is.** The feeling comes from God. Unless you are fooling yourself. If you feel you are born to be a singer, but no-one can stand your voice, for example

**God has also shaped your past, for your future destiny.** Paul grew up as a Jew, in a Greek home with a Roman passport. Everything in his past qualified him for what God had for him now!

**The call will often come in the form of a burden.** Paul was burdened to "come to Rome". It was the worst place in the world to be called to a Christian ministry!! But he was "under obligation and indebted" to get there.

When you see the need, you see what needs to be done, and you have the burden for it, that could be the beginning of your call. It is not the call, but it could be the beginning of a call

**Your past and future fit.** *Even a bad past.*

*Charles Colson* was jailed for three years because of Watergate. But then he started Prison Fellowship.

*Martin Luther* was a catholic monk. Who better than him to challenge the papal system??

Was there any better person to teach us freedom from the law, than an ex Rabbi called *Saul*??

So your past, even the sins of the past, will feed into your future calling.

**Are you ready to inherit the promises?** You are not here for no purpose. No matter your past, looks, intelligence.

*Take one step at a time.* Do your duty for the next step.

*Have faith. Experiment. Take a few risks. Push upon every door. God will not let you collapse in a sea of mistakes. Cast your bread upon the waters.*

**You may be in confusion. This is not sin.**

Paul was in confusion "*that somehow at last by some means I might come to you*". He sounds pretty unsure!

And how did Paul eventually come to Rome? As a prisoner! And he was there for 5 years, in chains. He went on a prison ship. Appealing to Caesar. But he got there. And he was given a house and freedom. He went out over those years preaching the gospel.

*Anything might happen when you say, "Lord I want to know your will".*

But take one step at a time. Do the little things before the big things. Convert your neighbor before you go to China. Learn how to speak in Sunday School before you hold a crusade in Wembley.

**And when you have done his will, He rewards you as though you alone did it.** "*Enter into your inheritance*". And you get your inheritance twice. Here and in heaven.

**Don't be lazy or sluggish or too weak. Don't make excuses.** Be like the men of the Bible.

And you will be happy. Happiness is being in the will of God